

Computer Update Gaming

A Player's Guide to PC Gaming

September/October 1992

Issue #12

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THE SUMMONING

REVIEWED:

Aces of the Pacific
A-Train
Cruise for a Corpse
Dungeon Master
Dagger of Amon-Ra
Dune
Four Crystals of Trazere
Gateway
Legend of Kyrandia
Links 386 Pro
Gods
Prophecy of the Shadow
The Two Towers
Vegas Games Pack



Event Horizon's CRPG Masterpiece

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CG>README.TXT

As little 'ole Carol said in the movie **Poltergeist**, "They're ba-ack!" Rather, we're back with an all new issue to fill your grubby little hands.

You'll notice some major changes in the look and content, but more importantly, we're now a bi-monthly 'zine. All right, we're 50% less frequent, but I'll tell you this: it's -worth- it. By publishing every other month, we can pack in more information, work out fine details and basically deliver a more solid product, without killing ourselves in the process. Think of it as two **CGUs** in one, and I assure you it'll sound really good (heh heh).

Our all new look sports all new features, like this Readme.txt editorial (where you'll hear what our editors have to say for the moment); Zach Meston's own **Tids & Bits**, where you'll hear industry gossip so bizarre, and downright funny, you'll wonder how someone could ever find out such things; **Game Start**, our "poke fun at" column aimed at everyone and anyone who ever told you the ending to a game or movie, without your consent; and loads of reviews. We hope you enjoy it all!

And finally, we've got loads of ideas for future issues of **CGU**, with one of our first implementations to take place in the next issue. Looking Back, a column by the editors, will take a look back at the previous issue of **Computer Gaming Update**, and comment on everything that looked either stupid, didn't sound right, or plain disagreements with each other. Why do we need such a column? Well, that's easy enough to answer: You can't have law without a bit chaos, can you? Besides, we'll do everything we can to show y'all that we're not a bunch of elitist gamers who always pat each other on the back; we complain, we dislike, we disagree, and sometimes we plot to kill each other by hiring the Black Panther squad. Now ya see, that's what the American people want.

-- Danny

Approximately 3 years ago I 'came over' to the MS-DOS by purchasing a second hand 386sx-16. It was a complete system including a 44 megabyte hard drive. At the time it was enough for my needs: Games. Powerful enough to run everything with room enough to fit anything.

My needs haven't changed since that fateful day. Other than the occasional article, I still devote most of my computer time fiddling with 'recreational software'. Alas, while my wants or expectations haven't changed, the software has. Companies started mammoth productions that took several man-years to develop. Origin claims **Wing Commander 2** took 10! Gone are the days of a single programmer churning out a program on his own. Now teams of coders work together headed by a designer who does very little, if any, programming himself. Different teams work on separate parts of the game which are then integrated into a whole.

If the programmers and beta testers have done their job, then the modules should flawlessly perform together. Yet more often than not they don't. **Falcon 3.0**, **Darklands**, **Magic Candle II**, and even **Ultima 7** were crippled by unseen bugs. Bugs which the consumer was responsible for fixing. Imagine buying a car with a high percentage of brake failure. Shouldn't the manufacturer be responsible for notifying the owners and offering avenues for repair? The consumer protection act was passed for just that. It should not be the buyers duty to correct the problems that existed BEFORE purchasing. Just recently another patch was released for **Falcon 3**, one which the players will have to track down on their own. Will it ever end? Nope, not as long as games continue to get more complex and companies are pressured to release them on time. Either schedules should be adjusted to give more time or consumers should adopt a wait-and-see attitude toward recent releases. Let's all hope that **Strike Commander**, after more than a year delay, manages to come out free of those pesky critters.

-- Terrence

News & Industry

Compiling and commenting by Danny Han

Electronic Arts acquires Origin Systems...

Nope, this isn't an April Fool's joke. It's quite true, and in fact, we've got some dirty figures to share with you. First of all, EA has purchased the Texas based software company for a reported \$35 million, which will make Origin Systems a wholly owned development team for Electronic Arts. Secondly, rumor has it that Richard Garriott signed a Contract of No Competition, which basically states that Richard Garriott will not develop any games for a period of 4 years, should he leave Origin Systems. We don't know about you folks, but this sounds awfully familiar to what Atari did to Nolan Bushnell years ago.

EASN and ESPN

So, what does this logo on the right have in common with litigation? Oh, just that the ESPN network (the all sports cable channel) is rumored to be filing a lawsuit against EA for the use of the logo. Apparently, the cable station believes the EASN (Electronic Arts Sports Network) logo is an infringement on the ESPN logo (both look similar in design). Who's gonna win? Well, we have our money on Electronic Arts, simply because the EASN logo has been around for quite some time. Only now does ESPN decide to do something about it? We'll keep you updated on the situation.



EA forms an alliance with JVC...

Electronic Arts and Victor Musical Industries (a subsidiary of JVC) have joined forces to produce and market EA titles in Japan. Under the new company name, Electronic Arts Victor (EA Victor), the new company expects to convert a wide array of EA titles for use on leading Japanese PCs. The new company will be based in Shibuya-Ku Tokyo, and expects to be open for business sometime in November.

Gamers upset with Microprose's Darklands...

Microprose just released its long awaited fantasy CRPG, *Darklands*, to an eager public. Unfortunately, the release was bug ridden beyond belief, firing up some bitter sentiment from more than a few players. Some of the comments included users being less than thrilled about paying \$50 for a game, only to do the beta-testing the company should've done in the first place. Stores are rumored to be dropping the product from their shelves after the initial shipment, and are not re-ordering the product due its buggy state. Already, two patches are available to correct numerous problems, only to uncover some new ones in the process (the latest patch

includes the ability to restore a game within the game (No, really, you need a patch to do this!). We'll have our full review next issue, so watch out, Microprose <grin>.

Ad Lib is back in business...

Yes, folks, they're back -- and they've got the Ad Lib Gold 1000 to prove it. Ad Lib got a shot in the arm after being revived by a German holding company. Soon after the deal took place, Ad Lib Multimedia shipped the awaited Ad Lib Gold 1000, where it's currently on sale in Canada. FCC approval is pending before the board makes its way to these United States.

Wizardry VII finally ready to ship!

Sir-Tech's *Wizardry VII: Crusaders of the Dark Savant* should be shipping by the time you read this. A quick call to the offices in Ogdensburg, New York confirmed that the product was already being duplicated, with a whopping 32,000 copies on the first run. But the most startling thing of all is the game's size: approximately 5 megabytes, installed. These days, that seems so, so, small! But really, it's the gameplay that counts, and this one should be screaming with it.

SSI set to release an Underworld clone...

Hey, you knew the *Ultima Underworld* phenomenon would catch on quick (even Taito, the coin-op developer, will soon be releasing an arcade game based somewhat on the technology). Watch for SSI, though, as they'll soon release *Legends of Valour*, supposedly an *Underworld* type game with a larger game world, designed by the folks who brought *Corporation* (published by Virgin Games). Anyway, the word is it's like *Underworld*, but larger.

Speaking of *Ultima Underworld*, watch for the sequel sometime in the spring of '93. And yeah, it's supposed have all those "improved graphics and sounds", just like a sequel usually touts.

And finally, our last bit of *Underworld* news (you can tell we love the game, huh?): Origin System's *Ultima Underworld* is *the* most mis-named game in recent years, by our reckoning. How many times have you seen it called *Ultima Underground*? Yeah, we're sure you caught it more than once, and in more than one magazine. But if you didn't know, the game originally was to be called *Ultima: The Underworld* (check your old Origin catalogs if you don't believe us).

Clouds of Xeen faces the darkside....

New World Computing's latest installment in the *Might & Magic* series should be out now. But some interesting information from our

number one contact, Scott McDaniel of NWC, revealed that the maestros of CRPGs are already at work with the "sequel" to Xeen. The next game, **Darkside of Xeen**, will be able to install itself to the current **Clouds of Xeen** for an expanded adventure, or players can enjoy each one separately. Each game provides its own challenges and end-game sequence, but may be linked for a larger game world.

New SSI releases due soon...

Watch for **Spelljammer**, the first SSI product set in the hybrid sci-fi/fantasy AD&D setting of the same name. The game features an engine that's a cross between **Matrix Cubed** and **Eye of the Beholder**, and should be released sometime this month.

We already spoke of **Legends of Valour**, which is due in November, but also watch for Gary Grigsby's **Pacific War**, which is also slated for November. **Pacific War** takes place during the second world war, and will detail every aspect, including land, sea and air attacks.

Finally, the awaited **Dark Sun** adventure, another new AD&D world, will be available sometime in December (just in time for Christmas). **Dark Sun** will be the first in a series that will bring the aging "goldbox" engine into the world of 16bit processing. (While everyone else is moving to 32bit ... sheesh)

However, just released and available to everyone are **The Summoning** (isometric, single player RPG by Event Horizon for SSI), **CyberEmpires** (a strategy/arcade game) and **Great Naval Battles**. We'll have reviews on the latter two, but you can find **The Summoning** reviewed on page 10 (yeah, like you didn't notice the cover).

Gravis UltraSound ships...

Well in Canada, that is. Several thousand boards were shipped to the land of John Candy, but word has it that the boards are shipping in the US as you read this. Unfortunately, there have been a few complaints already concerning the board's ability -- or inability -- to emulate the Sound Blaster. Reports of total lock-outs with some games; noticeable speed decrease in others; and altogether no booting are just a few of the complaints circulating. But oddly enough, the board supposedly works flawlessly with other games with Sound Blaster emulation, so the problem is, "Why does it flake out on some, and not on others?"

Other UltraSound news include the option to add one of *three* SCSI devices to the board via a daughterboard option. Apparently, Sony and Philips both approached Advanced Gravis about developing a special board for their new generation of doublespin CDROM drives (drives capable of 300K transfer rates and faster seek times). The third option will be available as a standard SCSI interface, and all options should be available sometime in the early months of 1993.

Privateer: A game of Wing Commander trading...

Word is out that Origin is hard at work on an *Elite* style game of trading and commerce. Set in the **Wing Commander** universe, under the working name of **Privateer**, it will feature contract

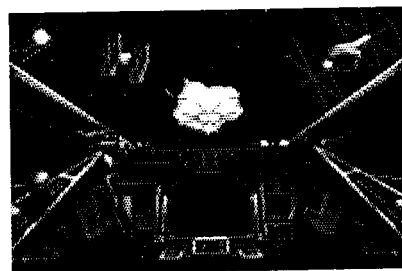
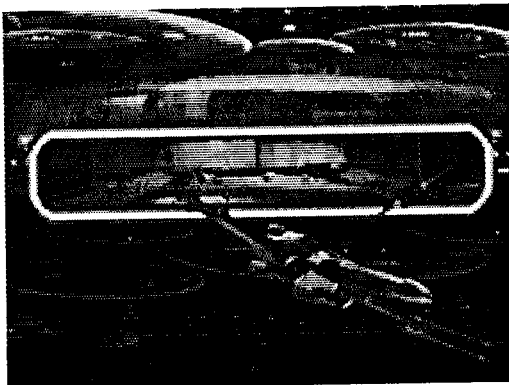
missions, bounty hunting, smuggling, and everything else you'd imagine a free-runner for hire would do. Early news indicates the game won't have much to do with the war between the Terran Confederacy and the Kilrathi (you're an enterprising business-man, not a Confederate grunt), but during the game, player's will hear news and reports concerning developments in the war. We're not exactly sure when this game will be out, but our educated guess leads us to believe sometime in mid 1993 (if we're lucky; remember, this is Origin, folks). We'll certainly keep you up to date on developments, for your pleasure as well as ours (afterall, *Elite* was a personal favorite during our days on the C64).



The long awaited **Strike Commander** should be shipping in the early days of December (of this year. Man, with Origin, you've gotta give the year), according to our sources. Until then, we've got a screenshot above to hold you over...

LucasArts brings X-Wing fighters to the PC...

That wacky team of developers who brought us the **Monkey Island** series are hard at work on their latest project, **X-Wing**. A space simulator modeled after the hit movie, **Star Wars**, **X-Wing** will feature polygon graphics and will undoubtedly be major competition against Origin's popular **Wing Commander** series. The game will feature a series of campaign type missions; full co-pilot assistance through an R2 unit; squadron and wingmen control; and lots more. **X-Wing** is hoping for a Christmas release, and of course, we'll have a full review in an upcoming ish.



Trilobyte's 7th Guest...

Trilobyte's massive CDROM adventure (which is receiving more hype than it really deserves), **7th Guest**, is looking for a release on two CDs. And further rumor indicates a third, which will also come packed with various game demos from publisher, Virgin Games. The rumored price will be just under \$100 retail.

Finally...

Before we end this issue's News & Views, we've got a bit of hot gossip to get you all excited. Check this out: Microprose is looking to release a revamped version of their classic, **Pirates!**, to be called **Pirates! Gold**. Exciting, or what?

Aces of the Pacific

Aces of the Pacific is the latest flight simulator from Damon Slye of Dynamix, whose credits include **Both Red Baron** and **A-10: Tank Killer** -- two award-winning, best-selling games. Add to this **Aces of the Pacific**, a game that may well be the best flight simulator ever produced

Aces allows you to fly for the Japanese Navy or Air Force, or the American Navy, Marines, or Air Force in the South Pacific. Your flight experience can be limited to one of several single mission forays, where the mission conditions can be set to your liking, or you can fly the entire war from Pearl Harbor to the destruction of Japan. Carrier take-offs and landings are supported, in addition to land-based assignments. The full, rich history of the Pacific conflict, with island-hopping campaigns, can certainly be experienced.

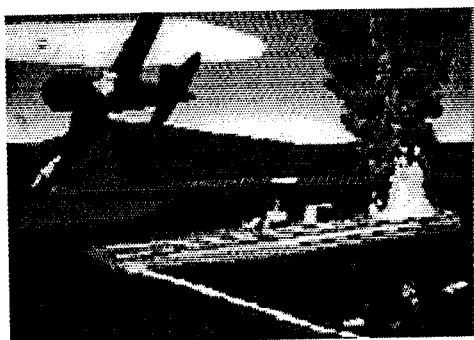
The flight simulator of **Aces** is the most realistic that I have yet seen. The graphics and animation are smooth, detailed, and realistic, while flight equations used to simulate the flight characteristics of the 36 planes are very

accurate (i.e., planes accelerate unsafely at high altitudes). The Lightning climbs quickly and with the least of power, while the Corsair tends to spin when it tumbles down. The Japanese Zero is so nimble and agile that precise controls are required to bring the small caliber guns to bear effectively.

Situational awareness is enhanced by many internal and external views of the aerial world. Communications between flight members allows for effective command and co-operation of pilots and wingmen. The mission recorder allows you to select what missions to save to disk after their completion. Autopilot can be set from the map display, allowing for a change of flight plans to accommodate in-flight emergencies and conditions. Some defects in frame rate, map functioning, and difficulty settings have been corrected in an upgrade disk available from Dynamix.

Fast 486DX 33MHz processors experience jerky animation when more than 12 planes are in the same dogfight, and slower processors will lag. An upgrade disk, which corrects the jerkiness of the frame rate, should be available directly from the company by the time you read this article. A very complete and informative 240-page manual is included which helps in making **Aces** one of the best, perhaps the best, and certainly one of the most enjoyable flight simulators available today.

Category: Flight Simulator
Developer: Damon Slye
Requires: 80386SX CPU, 2 Megabytes DOS 5.0, 256 VGA
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1
Opt'l: Thrustmaster FCS & WCS
Size: 8 Megabytes

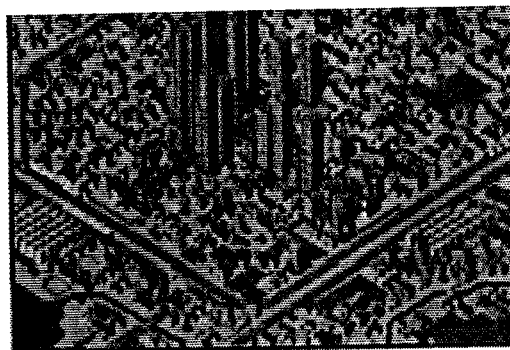


A-Train

Civilization, Railroad Tycoon, SimCity, and other games have been designed to simulate what it is like to build a vast empire through proper planning. **A-Train**, an IBM port of a Japanese (Fujitsu FM-Towns) best-selling game entitled **Take the A-Train III** (released in April of '86), is another that follows that same concept.

A-Train is a railroad game, a city building game, and a financial game. As the manager of a large privately-owned mass transit system, you are empowered with the task of developing an efficient, environmentally acceptable passenger and freight rail-based transportation system. You take the role of manager in developing primary and secondary spinoff industries to enhance profitability and stability through diversification and expansion of sales. Even-

tually, the success of the company and its subsidiaries will lead to investment, via the stock market, in other companies, and the accomplishment of the final goal: the accumulation of an embarrassing amount of cash.



A-Train provides five different train engines including the AR III, which appears to be the A-Train equivalent of the bullet train. Once trains are purchased they must be used for the most profit and utility. Japan's success in running the world's first rail-based mass transit has resulted in European interest in the development of the now highly profitable 100+ mile-per-hour train systems.

The money game in **A-Train** allows the financial wizard to pour over financial statements, borrow money from the bank, and invest in 24 different types of over-the-counter stocks of other industries to enhance, influence, and expand profitability. In the end, money is the main goal of the game in that the game ends with sufficient

excess cash or insufficient cash in either a win or loss, respectively.

Category: Strategy
Developer: Artdink
Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, EGA, VGA(16), MCGA
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, Roland, Sound Master & Tandy
Size: 2 Megabytes

The mouse is used extensively with a series of pull-down menus, but hot keys can be used for those who prefer the keyboard. The game comes with

a 139-page manual that is packed full of details about railroading and how to play. The game itself is a dazzling array of high resolution VGA details and comprehensive sound board support, but no attempt is made by the creators to use sound and sight to entertain or reward the game-player. All of which makes **A-Train**, in some ways, a little bit more like work and education than entertainment.

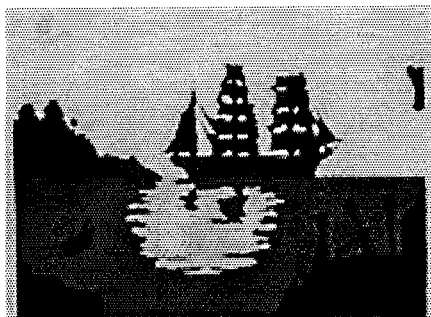
Alfred Giovetti

Alfred Giovetti

Cruise for a Corpse Dagger of Amon-Ra

Cruise for a Corpse, Delphine's third graphic adventure game, uses a cartoon-like interpretation of their Cinematique point-and-click game system. The full-screen display of the characters, larger than other Delphine games, has been used to give the characters more detail, and allows for greater expression and subtlety of movement. **Cruise's** Agatha Christie-like plot shows the French love of intrigue, and the French attitude that no one is innocent. Every one of the eleven suspects on the ship, except for the bartender, cook, and wash woman, have something to hide. Much of the plot involves questioning the suspects and revealing these secrets on the investigative topics menu.

Unlike obvious detective stories, the butler not only did not do it, but is one of the three victims. The plot has a most unusual set of twists that remind one of the best murder mysteries. The characterization is well done, with many interesting and complex characters that respond dynamically to questioning. Raoul Dusentier, a French Police Inspector, must not only question suspects but eavesdrop on conversations, and accumulate physical evidence, which can be shown to suspects or added to the investigative topics menu.



Cruise has at least 26 save games, comes with a map of the ship, an enjoyable, if incomplete, European version game manual, and high density floppy disks. The color palette of yellow and brown tones amplifies the somber mood. Sound support includes musical theme, sound effects, and mood music, which cannot be turned up, down, off, or on. The color-and-symbol-based off-disk code-wheel copy protection uses subtle color variations, making reading the disk difficult even for those with perfect color vision. Some translations from French to English are inaccurate, but not unintelligible.

In spite of some minor problems, the interface is effective and easy to use with the mouse. There is an effective method of travel using a pop-up mouse that allows you to click to your destination, unless you would rather walk. The inventory is virtually infinite, and made more manageable by items that disappear when used. The detective plot gives more in the way of mental gymnastics than the usual graphic adventure. The detective graphic adventure should prove an entertaining diversion from the multitude of fantasy and science fiction adventure games on the market.

Category: Adventure
Developer: Delphine
Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1
Size: 3 Megabytes

The roaring twenties. A time when flappers and gangsters flourished side by side in speakeasies. A time when America was just discovering its newfound status in a changing world. A time when bodies were dropping like flies in scary museums. And it's up to you, cub reporter Laura Bow, to ferret out the killer(s) from the not-for-long long list of sordid suspects.

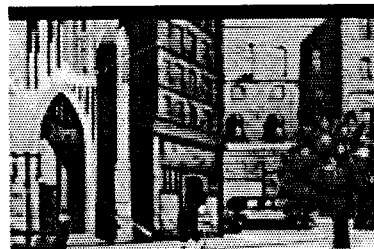
Shortly after arriving and receiving a true to life Big Apple welcome (robbery and a mugging) it's a short visit with Crodfoller Rhubarb, the reporter who was originally looking into the burglary of the **Dagger of Amon Ra**. He'll provide you with your initial leads and trusty notebook, the interface through which you'll interrogate NPCs. Every object and person of significance you come across will be added as another entry. By questioning NPCs with them you'll

receive more leads and more entries until you've exhausted all of the possibilities.

Taking your own notes throughout the game is a must as clues are planted everywhere and precise conclusions

and motives must be pieced together in the next and final act. Conspicuously absent, however, were the things that four other episodes all take place in the Leydencker museum, the scene of the initial crime, and a ritzy, exclusive party to celebrate the momentous discovery of the **Dagger** (wee ha! museum which, although it exhibits many masterpieces, must not be able to afford a decent janitor as few of the bodies are ever cleaned up after. Instead they're left exactly where they were first discovered in all of their gory circumstances. So expect to see bodies, blood, and bones everywhere.

Graphics are slightly above average for a Sierra game, which is to say it's excellent throughout. Much detail was paid toward the reproduction of architecture from this period. The music also lived up to Sierra's distinguished reputation, seamlessly weaving a spell that took me back to my childhood. As expected **DoAR** utilizes the generic point-n-click interface they invented. Nothing noteworthy enough to mention here.



This game has a few strong points going for it. Most of the puzzles are clever and quite intricate in design. Challenging but not impossible though I'd still advise the beginner to think twice before picking this game up. Graphics and sound/

music are very good, which would make it an wonderful addition to any library if that was all that mattered. Unfortunately the strength of the storyline is a major factor in a mystery. Here **DoAR** falls short, not being very captivating from the outset. The plot was a bit too thick for my tastes (going into greater detail would give it away), and I thought the motives were loosely strung together. A great shell but that's it.

Alfred Giovetti

Terrence Yee

Dune

First there was the book, followed by the movie (with a boardgame equivalent), and now there's the computer game, one the developer (Cryo Interactive Entertainment) calls a game of "tactical role playing". As in a typical role playing game, players must interact with various characters to gain information, and to finally use that information in the taking over of Dune.

In order to take over the planet, the player needs to do several things, which includes rallying of the freemen (the locals of the planet) to mine the miraculous property known as Spice. Once rallied, the freeman can be moved from place to place on the planet to mine different areas, while others will be needed for military purposes. At first, you need armies to defend the mining activities, but later in the game they will be needed to take over the Harkonnen occupied portion of the planet: the resident rival family hated by the freemen. Throughout the game, the player needs to find and provide both mining and military equipment to supply the freemen, and you'll need to worry about keeping the freemen motivated and deployed properly. If this weren't enough, the Emperor demands spice shipments every few days, and must be kept in his palace.

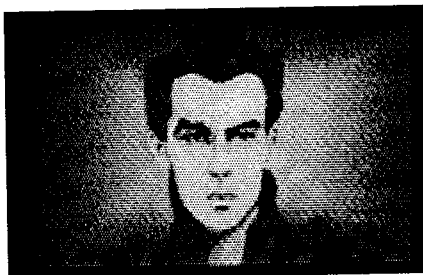
The first, and most enjoyable part of the game moves fast, making it very similar to a conventional adventure game. The middle portion becomes more tactical as you begin to worry about balancing military needs against mining needs. And finally, the last part of the game is military, but it's here I felt the game dragged.

The overall game I enjoyed, however, there were some irritations that will cause me to rate the game lower than I would have otherwise. Again, the last part of the game drags since going back to the palace to make the spice shipments becomes tedious. The sound generation portion of the program has a bug that in the latter part of the game causes some very annoying noises. Also, at the end of the game I got stuck because there was one Harkonnen Fortress that I hadn't found and destroyed. I wish that the Mentant, Paul's military advisor, would have told me so instead of just saying "nothing new yet".

On the plus side, I felt that the game had a wonderful interface and very good graphics. Also, the mixture of role-playing game and tactical game was done well, giving one the feeling of being involved in the novel.

Daniel Masterson

Category: Strategy/RPG
Developer: Cryo Entertainment
Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA256, EGA
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1
Size: 5 Megabytes



Four Crystals of Trazere

We are encamped in yet another dungeon of terror, another strange, powerful and evil entity, monster, wizard, demon or god is sending his telepathic message of terror across the land. Once peace-loving citizens find themselves transformed into monsters who do real-time battle with weapons steel and weapons arcane against your party of four.

This time the land cast into chaos is Trazere, a small, two-dimensional landscape dotted with towns, castles, dungeons and keeps. Several unique structures include the cave of the Ancient, who doles out the arcane wisdom for an exorbitant fee; Moonhenge, which holds the key to the struggle for mastery of the stones; and the Unshrine, which grants a clue in exchange for answering questions. Within the many towns and castles are the artisan

guilds, which include blacksmiths, shops of magical artificers, holy temples of healing and good fortune, taverns of bardic magic and clues, and apothecaries of reagents needed to mix the unique spells of this game.



Combat is in real-time in the dungeons or the

outdoor battlefield, with a diamond-shaped, overhead oblique display. Surrounding the battlefield are plinths, or stone pedestals, that control the action of the battle by directing the tactics, special skills, and magic of each character. Each party member will need to use their special skills to survive each deadly encounter. The mutant hordes of Trazere include encounters, puzzles, and random encounters with increasingly dangerous mutant monsters.

The magic system is versatile in that both effector and director elements of the spells are provided, from which a multitude of spells can be constructed. Spells can be made to have differing strengths, actions, and effects. A virtually infinite number of spells can be created, but only ten types of spells can be held in memory.

Category: RPG
Developer: Mindscape
Requires: 512K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA16, EGA, CGA, Tandy
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1
Size: 1.5 Megabytes

Before buying this game know that it is a real-time combat role-playing game with top-down perspective: those who prefer rounded combat or first-person perspective may be disappointed.

The VGA graphics and full stereophonic sound are not up to today's standards, so the game may not appeal to those who are impressed by flashy graphics and sounds. The game play and magic system is a breath of fresh air, and even includes automapping. The only problem with the game is that it may be a little too hard for the average game player.

Alfred Giovetti

Admittedly, I never read a single word out of Frederik Pohl's Heechee Saga, on which this game is based. So comparing game to book is tentative at best (and I won't even attempt it, really). But in a nutshell, the story begins on the newly found alien starbase dubbed "Gateway". Mankind's greatest revelation into the history of an enigmatic race, the Heechee, dozens of preprogrammed ships are found onboard, and your mission is quite simple: play the role of a guinea pig, and find out where these ships lead -- to even greater HeeChee discoveries. That's what everyone hopes, anyway.

The interface, also used in Legend's earlier games, works for both point 'n click enthusiasts, or genuine parser junkies (though after a while, I'll wager anyone who plays for an extended period of time will ditch the mouse and tackle the keyboard). The parser is clean and simple to use, and understands some very complicated commands.



The standard screen lay out contains user input on the lower half of the screen, with a small window for location graphics occupying the upper right. Each of these location screens are rendered in hi-resolution, 16 colors (with resolution adjustable for Super VGA), and much to my surprise, look pretty darn good for 16 colors. But the real graphic treats are during key scenes, where full screen, 256 color graphics come across with vibrancy and color that the standard low resolution output. Sounds are supported to a certain degree (with a basic background music accompanying most of the game and changing with locations). Digitized sound effects are also available, supporting appropriate sound boards.

Perhaps a bit on the easy side, but definitely no one night pushover, Gateway fills the void when it comes to good sci-fi text adventuring. The story, carefully involved, moves at a constant pace, but really picks up towards the end, and anyone who enjoys an episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation might find Gateway even more to their liking.

NOTE: There's a bug in the game. Quite a nasty one, since you'll be genuinely stuck in the game unless you know how to work your way around it. Here it is: In the armory on Gateway, you might encounter

a problem with trying to place the gun in the cleaning robot's bin. Faulty timing within the program won't allow it. To correct this, save the game outside of the armory, and exit from the program. Restart, and click NO when asked to restore your game. After you escape your way out of the intro, just restore your game from within the newly started game, and all should be taken care of.

Category: Text Adventure
Developer: Legend
Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA256, EGA, CGA, MCGA
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1, RealSound
Size: 7 Megabytes

Origin was the first to do it: the producing of games that required the 32bit processing power of the '386/486 CPU. The game's coding, centered around the new processors, allowed for more complex imagery and graphics. Following Origin's lead, Access took the highroad to 32bit programming with Links 386 Pro -- and the results are truly amazing.

Pro plays a standard game of golf, and comes complete with an 18 hole rendition of the famous Barton Creek links. The method to hit the ball, standardized from the original Links, requires the player to watch a circular meter, pressing the mouse button at just the right time. One can view replays of a shot, and even save them as recorded files. But certainly the most unique feature, aside from the enhanced look, is the option to play against another player's recorded game.

This, of course, is the perfect solution for anyone looking for a real challenger, and is as easy as logging on to a local BBS or network, and downloading a player's game.

Category: Sports
Developer: Access
Requires: 2 MB RAM, Hard Disk, 386SX/16 +, SVGA
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1, RealSound
Size: 6 Megabytes

Certain extras to enhance the entire

golf experience include a custom printer's output for score cards; the use of a statistic system to determine where the player's weak points are; creating custom setups for players who understand the dynamics of the golf swing; and the ability to import previous Links courses into the new 386 Pro format (a wonderful round of "golf applause" for the folks at Access for this money saving feature).

Not much has changed by way of interface from the original Links, released some three years ago. The procedure to swing a club, or putt a ball should be familiar to any version of Links players. What has changed, and certainly a testament to the power of the 32 bit CPUs, is the screen display. The entire game uses a high resolution, 256 color screen, and the visuals are simply stunning.



And much to this reviewer's delight (and dependent on system RAM) was the speed of screen re-draws. The program's use of a swap file allows for frequently accessed images to be stored in RAM, allowing for greater increase in overall rendering performance.

There's nothing about Links 386 Pro that can be held against it. It plays a fine game of golf, with no deficiencies in either ball addressing or flowing gameplay. So it's either this or the real thing, and let's face it: with Links 386 Pro, one never has to worry about a group, waiting and watching for one to go on with the shot. (And as any beginner golfer can attest to, is the most panicky thing that can happen, aside from having to yell, "Fore!") (NOTE: I think reviewing in the 3rd person sucks)

"The two, the wonderful, the two, the wonderful ..." starts coming out of the two speakers on either side of my computer monitor. My sound board has interpreted the code and the game of **Gods** has started. Some might say, "what do you expect from Bitmap Brothers?" Some might answer, "another hit, like their **Speedball 2!**"

Gods, a state-of-the-art arcade adventure game, employs a full-screen, side-view, third-person perspective that uses both horizontal and vertical scrolling. The window is overlaid by the graphic three-item inventory, the life beaker, lives left, gold, and text message windows. The interface is entirely joystick or keyboard controlled. The game lacks letter (alpha) keyboard or mouse control, which would have simplified the inputting of certain codes, such as the off-disk based copy protection codes taken from the illegible maroon code card.

Character interaction, other than the real-time combat with variations of the four basic monster types (thief, killer, flier and gigantic gurglings) involve controlling the thief by his directive to retrieve artifacts and kill the gurglings later. Thieves can be induced to go to a certain treasure item is dropped and retrieve inaccessible items.

Gods' artifacts are weapons, armor, arcs, pots, keys, life, healing, food, and various potions. The weapons, food, armor, life, healing, and arcs do not use up inventory space, since they immediately upgrade artifacts when encountered. All keys and pots are carried, while life, food, and potions purchased in the store can either be carried or take immediate effect.

The sharp, crisp graphics and animation are colored with a palette that appears to transcend the 16-color VGA technology. The bright colors show predominantly grey walls, with shades of flesh tones for the characters, while the musical score is professionally synthesized by Nation XII's John Fox in Rhythm King Records' music studio.

Gods incorporates many good puzzles that one may recognize from other adventure games. Other than the limited save game utility, and the very hard puzzles, **Gods** is an enjoyable game with crisp, sharp graphics that should appeal to an audience composed of both arcade and adventure game enthusiasts.

Category: Arcade

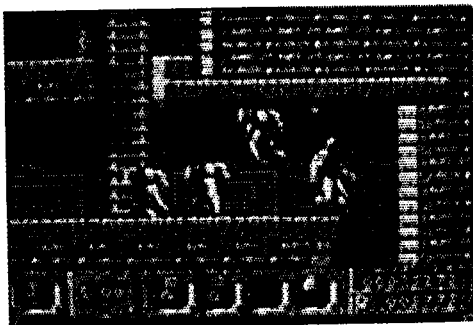
Developer: Bitmap Bros.

Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA256, EGA, TGA, CGA

Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1, Realsound

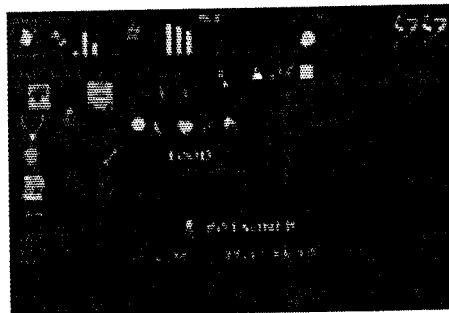
Size: 1.1 Megabytes

90



Probably the longest lag time between the Amiga and Atari ST versions of a game and the IBM-PC conversion has been witnessed in the five year-hiatus since the introduction of **Dungeon Master**. **Dungeon Master** is a classic in that it created the genre of the first-person perspective dungeon game that Strategic Simulations has exploited with their **Eye of the Beholder** series, and several European companies have attempted to duplicate with games like **Bloodwych**.

Dungeon Master is innovative in many different, subtler ways as well. **Dungeon Master** was the first game to use the "paper doll" inventory method, which allowed you to dress your characters in their garb and equipment.



Dungeon Master was the first role-playing adventure game to use combat practice as a means to increase level and proficiency. Just having your group, whether or not they are in the presence of an enemy, attempt to cast spells increases either wizard or clerical proficiency; shooting a bow at a door increases ninja skills; and swinging a sword increases fighter proficiency.

There is no combat mode in **Dungeon Master**. The game play does not change from the first person perspective view. In the fight, spells or missile weapons could first be seen flying through the air toward their intended target in **Dungeon Master**. The intended target could side-step the flying threat to avoid damage.

On the downside, **Dungeon Master** virtually eliminates tactical combat and traditional puzzles in favor of find-and-push-the-minus-cule button, lever, or floor switch, find-and-use-the-appropriate key, gem, or artifact, and use of the illogical and tedious **Dungeon Master** "two-step" in endless real-time battles with infinitely generated monsters. **Dungeon Master** is the first of the new games that

Category: RPG

Developer: FTL

Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA16, EGA, Tandy

Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, Sound Source, Tandy, FTL Sound Adapter

Size: 2 Megabytes

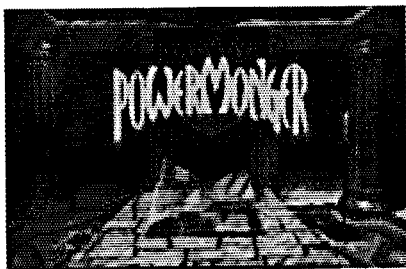
sacrificed the cerebral nature of the computer game and incorporated the graphics, sound, glitz, and real-time combat of the arcade game into the role-playing format.

The musical score incorporates parts of the 21 different instrumental pieces available on CD-ROM that were used in the Japan FM Towns CD-ROM version. The digitized sound effects are thrilling and realistic, from the mummy's rasp to the clang of weapons. **Dungeon Master** remains an aged classic, and, in spite of the 16-color graphics, is a must-buy game for any enthusiast.

Powermonger

Bullfrog, that little company with only a few games to its credit, has once again delivered a unique, and entirely engrossing strategy game that some might consider the "ungodly" version of their own *Populous*. You take the role as king, with no place to rule (blame indigestion on the earth's part). Word has come back from your spies that a new world, just across the ocean, is just waiting for someone to come in and take control. And off you go to battle through almost 200 separate land formations, to ultimately agree with the game's title: becoming a Powermonger.

Ultimate conquest is achieved by defeating individual pieces of land, occupied by other invading forces. As you first begin on each plot, your small contingent of devoted followers lay camped about your lone citadel. Either by treaty or force of arms, you can slowly take over as sole controller of each plot of land. Placing the mouse, and clicking the appropriate command, causes your followers to travel to the location indicated. Three forms of posture are available: passive, neutral, or aggressive, and these serve as the "sub-commands" to compliment the numerous main commands. Collecting food, for instance, with an aggressive posture, will cause your army to take all food within an area (or town, in the form of a raid). Likewise, clicking the command to create weapons, using a passive posture, causes your army to go about their business of making weapons in the background. A careful setting of the posture command, varying results will occur with each of the 12 direct game commands.



The 3D perspective is something that requires a little getting used to, especially when the screen is "zoomed" in to its maximum setting. Although the perspective works to show the gameworld, I never felt satisfied with the view size. It just never seemed large enough to see what was going on, requiring constant scrolling on my part to see whatever action was occurring around the countryside.

Despite the view screen's limited size, *Powermonger* still remains as a great strategy game. The level of detail throughout is quite evident, right on down to the use of carrier pigeons, or the deforestation of the land, causing adverse weather conditions. The game also features direct modem-to-modem play, which is an added plus in what already is one of the best "alternative" games you can get for your PC. With so many screens to conquer, it'll come as no surprise if this game sits for a very long time on the old harddrive. (Already, a World War II set has been released for the Amiga version, and will likely appear for the PC)

Category: Strategy
Developer: Bullfrog
Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA256, EGA
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1
Size: 2.5 Megabytes

Danny Han

Prophecy of the Shadow

Such an odd sight to see a computer role-playing game from SSI that has nothing to do with AD&D. Over the past 4 years, SSI has practically become synonymous with *Dungeons & Dragons* (oooh, don't let those conservative parent groups see that one), but recent efforts from the company have produced a few non AD&D titles, and *Prophecy of the Shadow* is one of the first of these "non-affiliates".

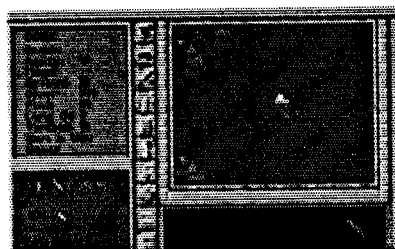
You assume the role of the unnamed hero, or at least, until you type in a name for him or her. Then it's off to the character generation screen, where you answer a few unoriginal questions about how your hero spent his or her childhood, subsequently creating your character's profile when all is said and done. There's no character class per se, but instead, dependent on how these questions are answered, attribute scores will be tipped accordingly.

Category: RPG
Developer: SSI
Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA256
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster/Pro, MT-32/LAPC-1, Sound Source
Size: 4.5 Megabytes

The story is easy enough: your master, and adopted father, has been killed by an assassin's flying dagger. It's time to avenge his death, and to ultimately come across a terrifying secret that's slowly waiting to take its toll upon the land. Scary or what?

The game employs a bird's eye view perspective, but unlike older *Ultima* style games (where the screen scrolls in progression), *PotS* uses a smooth scrolling game world to keep up with the player. Anyone who's played *Prince of Persia* will feel right at home with the interface, which uses a very easy to use point 'n click approach. Certainly the use of the now famous "point 'n click" catch phrase would lead you to believe the game is more complex than it is, but when every other NPC says the same thing as all the other Joes, you're left wondering whether this game came out a few years too late.

The claim to fame for this particular game, aside from its non AD&D status (okay, I'll cut it out already), is the use of digitized animation (over 100 individual, color clips) to liven up the storyline. Well, at about 5 frames per second, and with cheesy looking outfits, I'm



feeling a little partial to the tried and true method of original, animated artwork, or even elegant static screens. Well, at least if you've got a SB or AdLib compatible sound board, you can hear some interesting digitized sound effects to go along with the animations.

Look, *PotS* isn't bad. In fact, it's quite a decent game for a beginner, but for anyone who has any CRPG experience will find the game relatively short, and just a smidgen simple. Not bad, and certainly not great, is what this game gets, so take a look before you plunk down the money. In the meantime, you can walk yourself over to that "other" non AD&D game on page 10 and read all about that one.

Danny Han

The Summoning

The Summoning, Even Horizon's first product for SSI, puts you into the shoes of The Champion; the hero of the day whose one mission it is to seek out Shadow Weaver and put a stop to his evil plans of world domination. How did you manage to get yourself into this mess? Well, it's in your blood, quite literally, and besides, you get a free scholarship to the school of combat and magic, to learn you know what, for you know why.

The Summoning uses an isometric view to display the surrounding area of Shadow Weaver's labyrinthine domain, comprised of over 40 levels. The use of an easy to learn interface (molded for either mouse or keyboard jockeys) allows you to interact with the gaming environment with virtually no effort at all. For instance, combat is as easy as pressing the appropriate button when a monster approaches, and chopping away till someone is -- usually -- dead. As a result of the game's realtime approach, a little keyboard or mouse nimbleness is in order, but with anyone priding themselves as being real-time experts (countless days of Eye of the Beholder or Dungeon Master), then you should fit as easily in a silken glove (corny metaphor? Tell me, but the game is complete with puzzles to solve, usually in the form of pressure plates or levers that need to be pressed or pulled in a certain order). Moreover, access to further levels usually requires the completion of a certain set before the game allows passage.

Inventory management is straightforward; just place items in available slots on your characters profile screen. Items of an ornamental or fashionable nature may be placed directly on the character's "paper doll" counterpart, but just as easy, and eloquent in its own way, is NPC interaction. Dozens of NPCs are strewn about the various levels, and almost all hold some secret or story involving Shadow Weaver. The conversations are lively, and credit goes to the writer for producing some fine prose. Amazingly, the credit doesn't end there, since the game also allows the dumping of conversations to your printer. Quite a handy option, and even more handy when you realize that the game's included automapping feature is also prone to printer dumping.

Easily, there's no other game on the market that's quite like this one. It's certainly involving (with one of the weirdest end game sequences I've seen -- weird and satisfying, I should add), and will keep novices and veterans occupied for quite some time. Do yourself a favor; visit your local retailer, buy this amazing game, and don't let anyone bother you for ... oh, several weeks.

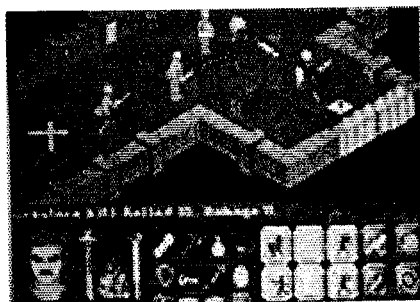
Category: RPG

Developer: Event Horizon

Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA256

Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1

Size: 3.5 Megabytes



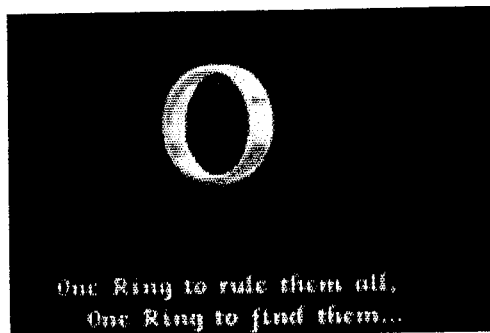
Danny Han

Two Towers

Of all the books that I have ever read, Tolkein's epic trilogy has had the most profound effect. Not because of some arcane philosophy, or some innate truth about life, but when I read it some chord within my being was struck that still resonates within me. Some perfect, mathematical sound that even now gives me pleasure. But most of the games that have been produced and based upon the works of Tolkein have missed the mark in one way or another. The plots are weak, they center too heavily on conflict, the emotional bond between the characters is neglected - in some way they fail to connect with the amazement of innocence and sheer sense of enjoyment that the books have given.

The one shining strength of the Two Towers is the richness of the non-linear, multifaceted plot that seems to brim with side plots that are both related and unrelated to the strivings of a band of friends

screaming to an unresponsive world that doom is upon them. The Two Towers takes us from Boromir's death and the dissolution of the Fellowship to the capture of the ring bearer in a spider cave near Cirith Ungol. The characters



meet the tree shepherds (Elves), Rohirrim (a nation of horse cavalry), and help defeat the forces of evil at Helm's Deep and Isengard.

The Two Towers interface is much improved from the flawed original. Switching characters while collecting skills, items, and spells or power words; travelling from place to place; player orientation through automapping; rounded combat; over 45 minutes of themed music; "cliff hangers"; 4-5 frame rendered-tile VGA animation; thirteen hot-keys; more precise mouse control; and six-save games are better. The background detail; the intricacies of forests, cities, and forts; non-intelligent object management; limit of ten skills; ten-item inventory; 15-digitized sound effects; lack of diagonal movement; speed of save games; and a few widely varied bugs

are not much improved or have gotten worse.

I enjoyed the game, but then I'm a Tolkein fan, and I liked the first game in spite of the problems. In some ways the game is better and in other ways

Category: RPG

Developer: Interplay

Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA256, EGA

Support: Ad Lib, PAS, Sound Blaster, MT-32/LAPC-1, Tandy

Size: 5 Megabytes

just as bad or worse. The plot is the thing, and this game has got it. I really enjoyed spending 30 or 40 hours with the friends of my youth getting to know them better. In many ways, Interplay's computer game provides us a better venue than the books themselves. Here we have a chance to participate in the adventure instead of the sideline spectating we do when reading those novels.

Alfred Giovetti

Legend of Kyrandia Vegas Games Pack

Westwood Studios is back with their very first graphic adventure, which -- according to their recently seen ads -- is in the tradition of the King's Quest series. Little did I know that **Fables & Fiends Book I: The Legend of Kyrandia** was similar in more ways than one...

The land is Kyrandia, now thrown into turmoil after the grisly murder of the king and queen by the treacherous court jester, Malcolm. Malcolm not only has the land of Kyrandia under his rule, but also the powerful Kyragem, source of all magic in the land. Now it's up to Brandon, heir to the throne, to reclaim the same and put an end to Malcolm's sadistic tricks. The game's interface is clean and simple, requiring no complicated parser commands or complex object manipulation to get immediate results. Moving is as easy as placing the mouse, either to an immediate location on the current screen, or to the edge, and Brandon moves along. Items you may encounter during your travels may be carried in limited inventory space.



Unfortunately, **Kyrandia** is much too easy to complete (hence the reason for my closing statement in the first paragraph. Oooh, low blow, huh?). Beginner adventurers will find the game to be adequate in length, but any veteran adventurer will breeze through it. There's also a lack of logic in some of the puzzles, which makes you wonder if the idea of saving and restoring serves some other purpose than just recording your game. What is it giving anything away, and assuming you'll see this location for yourself (not to complete the game, but to agree with my point) is the part where Brandon must concoct several potions through the trial and error use of gems and items of appropriate color. The illogical conclusion: no hint, or logic, in why a certain color functions for a certain puzzle. Furthermore, half of the concoctions don't work for whatever reasons, so it's back to the trial and error method to find the correct potion. Also, the game's humor needs a lot more work. I think it's safe to say the designers were shooting for a **Monkey Island**-ish approach to this game, but when Brandon is as dumb as a box of rocks, you have to wonder if **Kyrandia** really will be in better hands as Brandon (inevitably) ascends to the throne.

It's the game's length that hurts the score, and that's something that I'd like to see

extended in future installments. The graphics are well drawn, with some distinct animation tricks you'd expect from Westwood (the unfocused look when Brandon's father is writing on parchment is but one). Even the wonderfully orchestrated music lends a distinct feel to the game. But for all these, value for money is still on the shy side, and makes the game better suited for novices who'll find themselves playing longer than the experienced adventurers.

Category: Graphic Adventure
Developer: Westwood Studios
Requires: 640K RAM, Hard Disk, VGA256
Support: Ad Lib, Sound Blaster/Pro, MT-32/LAPC-1
Size: 7 Megabytes

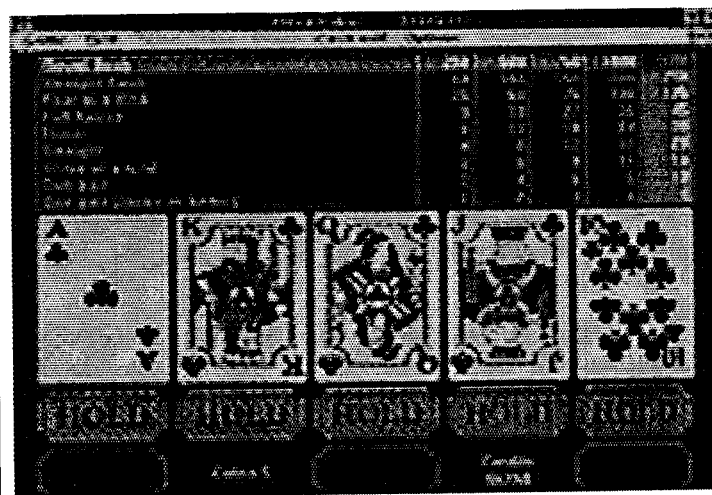
The day I receive this game in the mail, I ask my friend, "Who's gonna play this?" My friend, who works at a computer store, promptly replies, "You'd be surprised how many Windows users find themselves attracted to solitaire games, just to take a break from time to time." I dunno, maybe he's right. Too bad I don't use Windows enough to test this theory.

Designed by Nanosoft for New World Computing, **Vegas Games Pack For Windows** features five separate games of chance: roulette, keno, poker, blackjack, and slot machines. As you begin one of the games, you're first asked to sign in to the registry, thereby forming an account with \$1000 to your name. As you move from game to game, and use the same account, you'll be able transfer money between tables and keep your records intact. Of course, if

you run out of money, it's off to forming a new account. The program even keeps track of the highest winnings for each game, so if nothing more than just making loads and loads of money sounds somewhat dull, then try for a high

score of sorts. Each game comes with a hard and rules, and an on-line help directory is available in case you're a little rusty on the rules of the game.

I don't know, I guess someone will get a kick out of this; someone who's locked up in some God forsaken office, with cobwebs and a Lotus spreadsheet to keep him company. I just couldn't get into it, and that's probably because I'm A) not a gambler, B) a man of action and C) only boot up Windows to piece together CGU. And the prospect of only winning or losing video money doesn't make for a thrilling experience, at least in my humble opinion. So I give it an average rating, because somewhere out there (and more so than I probably will ever realize), people are going to buy this game and enjoy it. After all, I can imagine someone, after hours of looking at file drawers and program icons, finding solace in a bit of video poker.



Danny Han

Danny Han

'ZINE SCENE

"What the bloody 'ell is a 'Zine Scene doing in here?" I can hear you asking. Well, it's actually snug and cozy within these pages, and we just couldn't kick the poor thing out into the rain. The skin is just hanging on the poor thing's bones, and, well, we've got a whole cupboard full of food. We knew you'd understand...

Welcome to our first Fanzine Preview column. In it, we'll travel within the pages of current fanzines, and analyze them with a discerning eyeball. You know, sorta like a book review, but better. Because, you see, fanzines are the new backbone of the gaming industry. They reveal with passion the wants and needs, the opinions and throes of the gamer. They speak, with no hidden agenda or outside motivation, of the state of gaming. Where it's going, and where it should be going. They ... oh, just read this issue's 'Zine Scene.

Codename: MegaZine

Issue #1

Editors: Chris Larson, Darren Krolewski, Scott N. Weller,
Chris Johnston, James Thomas, and Noah Dziobecki
1209 Frisina
Pawnee, IL 62558
\$1.50/issue, \$7.50 for 1 year (6 issues)

The debut issue of *MegaZine* heralds the introduction of the multi-magazine, multi-effort fanzine. Chris pools the talents of several fanzine editors, as well as columns from their various fanzines, and wraps it all up into a two column format publication. Though not as crisp as Chris Johnston's *Paradox*, the 'zine allows for easy reading.

This issue features a candid interview with *Computer Game Review's* Steve Honeywell, reviews, and a small, contributed section for NeoGeo owners called *New World News Bits*. The section's editor, James Thomas, is definitely "Neo Geo" happy, which isn't bad -- just flagrantly bias.

Reviews and rumors round out the rest of the issue, with one review format I'd like to see more of: the Double Review (two reviewers examine the same game). Actually, I'd like to see it as a "contrast" double review, which might lead to some interesting points and counterpoints. Next issue will unveil the 'zine's new mascot, Psycho Kitty (a SPAM scarfing, Bill The Cat, roadkill lookalike). Until then, computer and Console gamers should do themselves a favor and give this unique fanzine a try. DH

Paradox

Issue #4

Editors: Chris Johnston, Jason Whitman, Tim Johnson, and
Justin Schuh
316 East 11th Avenue
Naperville, IL 60563-2708
\$1/issue, \$6 for 6 mos., \$11 for 1 year

A stylish fanzine that covers almost all platforms in the console industry, it comes a long way since its very first issue. *Paradox* looks to be one of the best laid out 'zines I've seen, with three column pages, and a very readable typeface, helping the presentation immensely. Pictures, however, are somewhat blurred, but certainly understandable, given the situation with Xerox machines.

The issue is prevalent with columns dealing with industry insights and opinions, with, of course, a fair share of rumor tossing. There is no specific column that takes an opinion or observation and compounds on it, but that's certainly not a requirement. The writing is done well, and I applaud the editors' "proofing" eye.

Problems I encountered were small, but a few should be mentioned. First of all, there is no indication as to the frequency of the publication, neither in the colophon or on the subscription form. Also, the reprinting of an article from a magazine contains no statement of permission for its reprinting, ironically foiling the editors' comment about people "using *Paradox* as a tool to get games," or to put it another way, the "...knocking off of our 'zine!" But *Paradox* certainly gets my vote as being a fanzine well worth checking out. DH

Video Gaming Monthly

Volume #2, Issue #7

Editors: Alex Frias
265 Cherry Street, Suite 6J
New York, NY 10002
\$1.00/issue, \$5 for 6 mos., \$10 for 1 year

Alex Frias, to my knowledge (and not experience) has been around for a while now, publishing his interesting 'zine. *Video Gaming Monthly* covers just about every console platform, including arcade developments, and yes, even the handhelds. While the writing is informative, it's still a little rough on the edges.

This issue contains more reviews than anything, with an editorial by Alex that doesn't stick to one thought, but rather, paragraph long opinions about the latest news concerning the industry. "Super-Coot", the enigmatic comic strip of an old timer's adventures in video gaming is, well, a bit strange, but I'm sure I'll pick up soon enough on the story with future issues. In the meantime, I'm scratching my head, trying to figure out the philosophy behind it. Also, Howard Altman's article "Console Pirating and The Effects on the Consumers" doesn't really explain the effect at all, save for one sentence in an otherwise lengthy article on how cartridge copying systems work, and winding down to a final paragraph that plugs VGM and urges the reader to subscribe to the fanzine. Also, the fanzine could stand for a little personality; not from the 'zine itself, but from the writers and editors who piece it together. Go ahead and check it out, but I don't see anything special. DH

If you're a fanzine editor, and would like to see your 'zine examined in 'Zine Scene, then send us a copy at:

Circuit City
ATTN 'Zine Scene
PO Box 240523
Honolulu, HI 96824-0523

All submissions are randomly selected for appearance and multiple or continued submissions are welcome. All opinions are solely those of the reviewer, whose initials appear at the end of each review.

TIDS & BITS

by Zach Meston

Tids & Bits, the controversial column that originated from the Amiga Games Guide, is now featured within the pages of CGU. Written by Zach Meston, an industry insider, and all around rumor monger, it reveals and opinionates, sometimes with bite, and almost always with controversy. We warn our readers that what you read might not always swallow well, so make sure you've got a cool glass of water handy. You just might need it. It's also important to note that Zach writes about the *entire* gaming universe. Don't be surprised to find news that's not necessarily "PC Gaming"; and certainly don't be surprised when you hear a bit of Genesis, or Super Nintendo here and there (well .. just about everywhere, actually).

It's back! It's bad! It's hated by most of Computer Game Update's readers! It's Tids & Bits, the column that isn't afraid to ask the question: "Do you ever have that ... not-so-fresh feeling?" T&B first appeared in these pages back when Computer Game Update was Circuit City Report, and while most of you were turned off by the general content (particularly my page-long item on typos in Electronic Gaming Monthly), a small but vociferous group of you loved it. So T&B has returned from the grave to entertain and irritate CGU readers with interesting stories and observations about the world of video gaming. Read on...

...It was with extreme curiosity that I purchased the premiere issue of Electronic Games, Katz/Kunkel/Worley's new magazine for Sendai--er, Decker-- Publications. KKW states that EG is aimed at "sophisticated, knowledgable readers," but if the first issue is any indicator, EG should be aimed at "sophisticated, knowledgeable, illiterate readers." Here's a typo summary. Total Typos: 183. (1.8 typos per page, or 2.4 typos per page if you don't count full-page ads.) Most Typos On One Page: 9.

Top Typos Of The Issue:

1. On page 9, a news item states that "Sales are reportedly booming for [the Atari Lynx]," but on page 16, the Game Doctor says "The Lynx has not sold well..."
2. The same yawn-inducing news item ("Software Publishers Elect Officers, Board") is printed on both pages 10 and 14.
3. On page 26, Sega's speedy blue dude is referred to as "Sonic the Hedgegog."
4. On page 32, Sega's portable game machine is called the "Game Fear."
5. On page 44, this headline appears: "Changes cause quesiton." A bizarre haiku poem, perhaps?

...Ex-squeeze me? Baking powder? Sega, how the heck did you let that early revision of Sonic the Hedgehog 2 get by with a zone named "Genocide City?" I can assure you that my Jewish friend did not find this particular name amusing...

...Speaking of Sonic 2, Sega went completely mental when a pirated version of the game was posted on a BBS near Sega's offices in California. At least one person at Sega was fired, and it's possible that more people will be terminated over the incident. And to think there are still some people out there who believe cartridge copiers aren't a problem...

...And yet more Sonic 2 gossip: Word has it that the Japanese programmers who flew into the U.S. to complete the game were egotistical buttheads that were quite difficult to work with. Of course, the previous word was that the programmers had quit Sega when Sonic 1 was bundled in with the Genesis, thereby robbing them of sales royalties. Stay tuned as my gossip hounds sniff out the whole story...

...Guess what! I looked through the previous six issues of Electronic Gaming Monthly! And I couldn't find one page without at least one exclamation point! In fact, some pages even had paragraphs with an exclamation point after every sentence! Or sentences with multiple exclamation points!!! Do you think all these exclamation points might be going overboard?! Nah!...

...Most people in the industry were taken completely by surprise when Electronic Arts bought Origin, mainly because the two companies have hated each other for years. Need proof? In Ultima VII, there are three evil magical objects -- a cube, sphere, and pyramid -- that happen to be the same symbols as Electronic Arts' "EOA" logo. Coincidence? Nuh-uh. So why did Origin hook up with their arch-enemies? Because they wanted to create games without worrying about marketing or money. EA's a marketing juggernaut, with unrivalled software distribution channels, and have plenty of dough to throw around (as evidenced by the buyout). Now the hot rumors have Origin working on a souped-up version of Strike Commander for EA's upcoming multimedia CD-based home system...

...American Sammy, a game company that produces titles for Nintendo's various game machines, was thought to have gone under when 90% of its employees were laid off, but the real story is tres' bizarre. Seems that Sammy's head honchos felt that the current staff was making too much money, so they fired 'em all and replaced them with recent college graduates that, thanks to a lack of job experience, could be hired for next to nothing. A smart business decision? Or complete retardation? You make the call...

...I like to think of myself as a mature person, but there's one topic I just can't deal with: feminine hygiene. Matter of fact, I usually run screaming from the living room whenever a feminine hygiene commercial is shown on TV. So imagine the horror of browsing through a decidedly non-feminine-hygiene magazine (Mondo 2000) and running into an ad for Menstat 2.0, which is, and I quote, "The first desktop software for tracking and estimating menstrual cycles." Ignoring my better judgment, I examined the screenshot in the ad and saw a box of menstruation events to check off: Bleeding, Ovulation, Cramps, and Headaches. Grossed out yet? There was also a bar graph to indicate the relative stickiness of menstrual mucus: Slick, Sticky, Dry, and Other. No, I do not want to know what "Other" could be...

...Tackiest game of the bi-month: **New Stubby City**, an Amiga shareware program created with Accolade's **Virtual Reality Studio**. The politically incorrect goal in **New Stubby City**: Seek out, and kill, fifty crack babies. Along the way, you'll trigger witty jokes such as "Save electricity. Unplug a crack baby." My sides doth split with laughter...

...Peter Olafson is without a doubt the best Amiga game reviewer around. But while browsing through a few recent issues of AmigaWorld, I noticed Peter had a tendency to use one word in particular ... but read for yourself.

September '92, page 76: "Maybe you could help from below, eh?"

October '92, page 72: "Difficult to imagine creating one of those on your lonesome, eh?"

October '92, page 72: "Nice garage, eh?"

October '92, page 101: "...yes, you can get away with a little bad attitude, but don't go nuts, eh?"

October '92, page 106: "You may even get yourself a girl, eh?"

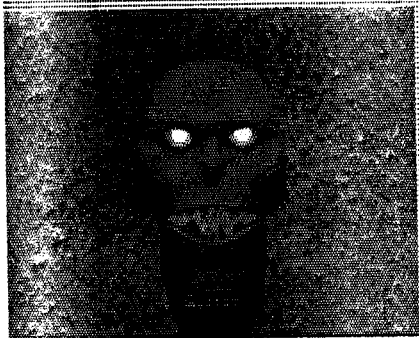
GAME START

by Danny Han

Ultima VII



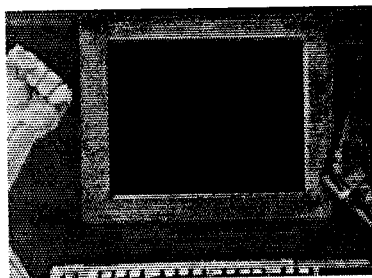
Oh, look! A beautiful butterfly fluttering through a serene landscape. How wonderfully attractive, and downright screaming with "something's gonna happen..."



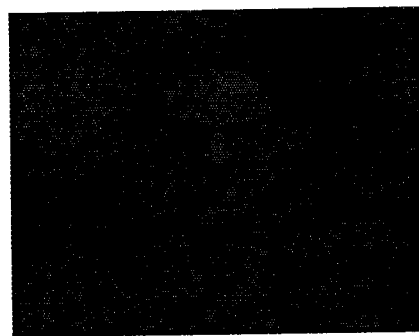
Quite the uninvited guest, that Guardian is. Since when has it become socially acceptable to visit someone when your eyes burn like the fires of hell, teeth jutting in every direction like an amethyst rock, and self-proclaiming to be a god and provider?

Everyone knows we're a goofy bunch of gamers. So goofy, in fact, that when we saw the Game Over section of magazines like EGM and CGR, where the editors decide to show you pictures of a game's ending, we just had to do something about it. No, we didn't lynch their offices, but we did the next best thing: Weaseled their idea, turned it into something more stupid, and decided that it's good for a laugh. So here you have it, our **GAME START** feature, with Origin's Ultima VII: The Black Gate.

Young Master Avatar must brave the hardships of Britannia in order to bring the dreaded Guardian down. Our Avatar must travel over long distances, follow people who are always one step ahead, and figure out the properties of Black Rock in order to accomplish this ultimate of quests. Can The Avatar do it? Will Britannia ever be the same? Well, we're showing you how the game starts, but it's up to you to find out how it ends!



Well, we don't think it ever was socially acceptable, so give your monitor a good whack. It's not too often unwanted faces appear on your monitor, so perhaps you'll need to take it in and get it checked for dimensional gates.



And something does happen. A face is forcing its way through the monitor, and it reeks of neanderthal cranium. Oh the humanity!



I guess we'll have to leave that monitor for another day. A rather peculiar moongate has conveniently placed itself right in your Victory Garden quality backyard. So step through and take on the perils of Ultima VII: The Black Gate.

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